

## CLAIM REJECTIONS

Applicant has amended the claims to conform to the limitations of former claims 2, 28, 32, 35 and 39. That is, all claims now require that an object external or outside of the group of selected objects be placed within the hierarchy. This amendment is made without prejudice or disclaimer to applicant's right to reassert the subject matter in a continuation application.

It is believed that these amendments narrow the issues presented, to facilitate examination of the application, or place it in better form for appeal. Entry thereof is respectfully requested.

Claim 1 is also amended to present the hierarchy, and thus corresponds on this issue with claim 32. Claims 1, 27 and 37 are amended to define a "taxonomic hierarchy", and thus correspond with language used in claim 23. Claims 2 and 39 are amended to include the word "semantic" which has been previously used in this same context in claim 10.

Claims 1, 14, 26, 27, 32 and 35 are rejected as being obvious under 35 U.S.C. § 103 over Hazelhurst et al. in view of Leshem et al. The remaining claims are also deemed obvious in view of various secondary references.

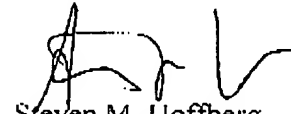
With respect to claims 2 and 28, the Examiner cites Hazelhurst, Col. 2, lines 48-56, Col. 10, lines 22-35 and Col 23, lines 1-14 as a basis for rejection. In fact, it is believed that these passages, and the reference as a whole, relates entirely to objects selected for their relationship to the user-input search criteria, and there is no teaching or suggestion that the object may be extrinsic or outside this set. An extrinsic object or one outside of the search criteria is an object outside the selected set of objects, i.e., it is selected independent from either the object search engine or the user selection criteria, and thus is not within this set.

The basis for the original rejection of claims 32 and 35 is not clear.

Thus, it is believed that, when the phrase "external object" or "outside" are properly interpreted, these clearly distinguish all of the cited references, and on this consolidated basis, render the application allowable.

It is therefore respectfully submitted that the application is allowable.

Respectfully submitted,  
MILDE & HOFFBERG, LLP



Steven M. Hoffberg  
Reg. No. 33,511

MILDE & HOFFBERG, LLP  
10 Bank Street - Suite 460  
White Plains, NY 10606  
914-949-3100